THE

EVIDENCE;

OR,

Religious and Moral Gazette.

RELIGION AND MORALITY ARE THE BASIS OF HUMAN FELICITY.

VOL. I.] JANUARY 21, 1807. [No. 2

SELECTIONS.

Character of Hume's Writings.

THERE has lately been published in England, a work, entitled "Hints towards forming the character of a young princess," in two vols. 8vo. Of this work the reviewers speak in terms of high praise. They say, that "Rumour ascribes these volumes to a literary lady of celebrity, (Mrs. Hannah More) and internal evidence inclines us to credit the assertion."

WE extract from this valuable work, for the benefit of our readers, the following just and admirable criticism on the writings of the celebrated David Hume.

"HIS finely painted characters of Alfred and Elizabeth should be engraved on the heart of every sovereign. His political prejudices do not strikingly appear, till the establishment of the House of Stuart, nor his religious antipathies, till about the distant dawn of the reformation under Henry V. From that period to its full establishment, he is perhaps more dangerous, because less ostensibly daring than some other infidel historians. It is a serpent under a bed of roses. He does not (in his *history* at least) so much ridicule religion himself as invite others to ridicule it.

"THERE is a sedateness in his manner, which imposes; a sly gravity in his scepticism, which puts the reader more off his guard, than the vehemence of censure, or the levity of wit; for we are always less disposed to suspect a man who is too wise to appear angry. That same wisdom makes him too correct to invent calumnies, but it does not preserve him from doing what is scarcely less disingenuous. He implicitly adopts the injurious relations of those annalists, who were most hostile to the reformed faith; though he must have known their accounts to be aggravated and discolored, if not absolutely invented. He thus makes others responsible for the worst things he asserts, and spreads the mischiefs, without avowing the malignity. When he speaks from himself, the sneer is so cool, the irony so sober, the contempt so discreet, the moderation so insidious, the difference between popish bigotry and protestant firmness, between the fury of the persecutor and the resolution of the martyr, so little marked; the distinctions between intolerant phrenzy and heroic zeal so melted into each other, that through he contrives to make the reader feel some indignation at the tyrant, he never leads him to feel any reverence for the sufferer. He ascribes such a slender superiority to one religious system above another, that the

young reader, who does not come to the perusal with his principles formed, will be in danger of thinking that the reformation was really not worth contending for.

"But, in nothing is the skill of this accomplished sophist more apparent, than in the artful way in which he piques his readers into a conformity with his own views concerning religion. Human pride, he knew, naturally likes to range itself on the side of ability. He, therefore, skilfully works on his passion, by treating with a sort of contemptuous superiority, as weak and credulous men, all whom he represents as being under the religious delusion."

THE IDEA OF AN ETERNAL SUCCESSION OF MEN REFUTED.

It is an imagination that frequently enters the minds of men, especially of the young, that this world may have been eternal, and had an eternal succession of men upon it. As this supposition is inimitably refuted by Dr. Bently, a man who has with much dexterity brushed away all the cobweb subterfuges of atheism, I am induced to copy a paragraph from his valuable work, and send it for insertion in your useful Miscellany.

"The opinion of those Atheists, that will have mankind and other animals to have subsisted eternally in infinite generations already past, will be found to be flat nonsense and contradiction to itself; and repugnant also to matter of fact. First, it is contradiction to itself. Infinite generations of men (they say) are already past and gone. But whatsoever is now past, was once actually present; so that each of those infinite generations was once in its turn actually present: therefore all except one generation were once future and not in being, which destroys the very supposition: for either that one generation must itself have been infinite, which is nonsense; or it was the finite beginning of infinite generations between itself and us, that is infinitely terminated at both ends, which is nonsense as before. Again, infinite past generations of men have been once actually present. There may be some one man suppose then, that was at an infinite distance from us now: therefore that man's son likewise, forty years younger suppose than his father, was either at infinite distance from us, or at finite. If that son too was at infinite distance from us, then one infinite is longer by forty years than another; which is absurd; if at finite, then forty years added to finite makes it infinite, which is absurd as the other. And again, the number of men that are already dead and gone is infinite as they say. But the number of the eyes of those men must necessarily be twice as much as that of the men themselves, and that of the fingers ten times as much, and that of the hairs of their heads thousands of times. So that we have here one infinite number twice, ten times, and thousands of times as great as another, which is contradiction again. Thus we see it impossible in itself that any successive duration should be actually and positively infinite, or have infinite successions already gone and past. Neither can these difficulties be applied to the eternal duration of God Almighty. For though we cannot comprehend eternity and infinity, yet we understand what they are not. And something, we are sure, must have existed from all eternity; because all things could not emerge and start out of nothing. So tha

if this pre-existent eternity is not compatible with a successive duration, as we clearly and distinctly perceive that it is not; then it remains, that some being, though infinitely above our finite comprehensions, must have an identical, invariable continuance from all eternity; which being is no other than God. For, as his nature is perfect and immutable without the *least shadow of change*, so his eternal duration is permanent and indivisible not measureable by time and motion, nor to be computed by number of successive moments; *One day with the Lord, is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*"

Let the reader peruse the foregoing extract, and pause at each link in the chain of argument, and if all is sound and irrefragable, let him never admit for a moment the absurd hypothesis of an eternal succession. *C. Y. A.*

[*Panoplist.*

The fulness of the New Testament.

The world is filled with books, and great numbers of them are excellent. How many men of the first talents have written admirably on the subject of religion! Every age can boast of its celebrated authors, who have consecrated themselves to the instruction of mankind. I have read many of them with pleasure and inprovement; but I find, that, when I have gone thro' them three or four times, I have gained all their ideas. In spite of me they become flat and uninteresting, and am obliged to lay them aside; for I can no longer read them with pleasure.

But the New Testament forms an exception to this rule. I have read many parts of it, hundreds of times; and can read them again to-morrow, with equal relish as at first. Whenever I peruse it with serious attention, I discover something new; and the more attentively and devoutly I do so, I discover the more: and new ideas spring out of the words and subject, and enrich my mind. Besides, I am never weary of reading it: it presents new charms to me every day: and like bread made of the finest of the wheat, it is always ageeable to the taste. The more I read, the more I love it; and the more intimate my acquaintance, the stronger is my affection for it. I have my favourite authors on religion; and I frequently peruse them. They are men of genius, learning, and piety. But they are only children, in comparison of the fishermen of Galilee; and I find a fulness and sweetness in their writings, which the others do not possess.

The following is an extract of a letter, to the British Bible Society, from a respectable clergyman in Alsace.

Accept, my dearest friend, our most unfeigned thanks for the sum of 30 l, which you have transmitted to us, as a kind present from some English friends, for the purpose of purchasing and distributing French and German Bibles among the poor inhabitants of our and the neighboring villages, where four different religious denominations are to be met with, namely, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Reformed and Baptists. May God, for Christ's sake, impart his blessing to this act of Christian benevolence, in order that his name may be glorified, and his kingdom come.

You will be glad to learn some particulars, respecing the use which I intend to make of this money.

I have ordered, and soon expect to get 50 copies of the French Protestant Bible, printed at Basil. Though the type is rather too small for country people, yet we have infinite reason to bless God for being enabled to procure even these. In the meanwhile, I have made a list of such persons as I consider most deserving of such a present. Among the large number of individuals and families to whom a Bible is a most welcome present, I first put down such characters as are most active of promoting the Redeemer's kingdom, and in doing good to the bodies and souls of their fellow-men.

The *first* Bible shall be given as a present to Sophia Bernard, who is one of the most excellent women I know, and indeed an ornament to my parish. While unmarried, she undertook, with the consent of her parents, the support and education of three helpless boys, whom their wicked father had often trampled under his feet, and treated in a manner too shocking to relate, when nearly starving with hunger they dared to cry out for food. Soon afterwards, she proved the happy means of saving the lives of four Roman Catholic children, who without her assistance, would have fallen a prey to want and famine. Thus she had the management of seven children, to whom several more were added, belonging to members of three several denominations: she now hired a house and a servant girl, and supported the whole of the family entirely with her own work, and the little money she got from the industry of the children, whom she taught to spin cotton. At the same time she proved the greatest blessing to the whole village where she lived. For it is impossible to be more industrious, frugal, clean, cheerful, edifying by her whole walk and conversation; more ready for every good word and work; more mild and affectionate, more firm and resolute in dangers, than she was: Satan so enraged some of her enemies, that they threatened to destroy her old tottering cottage, but God was graciously pleased to preserve her. A fine youth, of a noble mind, made her an offer of his hand. She first refused, but he declared he would wait for her even ten years. When she replied, that she could never consent to part her poor orphans, he nobly answered, "Whoever takes the mother, takes the children too." So he did—and all these children were brought up by them in the most careful and excellent manner. Lately, they have taken some other orphans, whom they have trained up in the fear and love of God. Though these excellent people pass rather for rich, yet their income is so limited, and their benevolence so extensive, that sometimes they hardly know how to furnish a new suit of necessary clothes. To them I intend to give a Bible, considering that their own is very often lent out in different Roman Catholic villages.

"BE JUST AND FEAR NOT,"

Is as excellent a maxim as ever afforded consolation to the breast of rectitude.—In our course of life, we find experience continually shewing to us, that to deal justly, and to act fairly, are the only ways to acquire the good things of this world, and to obtain that peace of mind, which superior to the little ills with

which a vicious world is filled, can *smile on the weak Phalanx, and defy its force.* To what but the innate evidence of this truth, can we attribute the sayings and feelings of children, respecting right conduct? They early have impressed upon them an idea, that defrauding even in play will not be prosperous: As mankind have advanced in life, they have invariably seen, that the goods obtained even by wayward methods which are not either illegal, or in the eyes of the world, disreputable, have suddenly dissipated, and scarcely left a benefit behind them; while the property acquired by honest industry, frugality and attention, has proved its stability by the blessings it hath entitled, and the prospect of transmitting it, unimpaired to posterity. The means used, the pains taken, and the plans projected to procure an unfair advantage, often causes more labor and study, than would be necessary to acquire double as much in a reputable and honest manner. See the ingenuity exercised by those who are the objects of legal punishment. Observe with what mechanical art and almost scientific genius, they will construct machines, and devise plans for wronging society, and robbing other people of their honestly acquired property. Half the talents exercised in a reputable way would secure them honor and fortune; instead of which poverty always haunts, and disgrace is sure to overtake them. The evidence of these truths are continually to be seen; and the first impressions made on the minds of youth are favourable; it must be attributed to unaccountable inattention, that they are so little regarded, or that injustice, fraud, and over reaching are not banished from the world. Ye parents! endeavor to strengthen these first impressions on your children—plant them deep, refresh them with the dew of the admonition; nurture them as they grow into years, and secure them, that they may withstand the mildew, of injustice, or unfairness.

The following Statement of the number of Places of Public Worship in London, is from Mr. Colquhoun's treatise on the Police of that city.

ESTABLISHMENT.

1 Cathedral dedicated to St. Paul,
1 Abbey Church, St. Peter, Westminster.
120 Parish Churches.
120 Chapels and Chapels of Ease.

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MEETINGS FOR DISSENTERS.

150 Consisting of Chapels for Methodists, Nonconformists, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Quakers, and English Roman Catholics.

CHAPELS AND MEETING-HOUSES FOR FOREIGNERS.

30 Consistiug of Chapels for French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, and Helvetic Protestants, for foreign Roman Catholics, and for those of the Russian, or Greek Church.

SYNAGŌGUES.

6 For the Jewish Religion.

482 Places of Public Worship in all.

In the Metropolis there are

16 Inns of Court and Chancery,
5 Colleges,
62 Public Seminaries,
237 Parish Schools,
3730 Private Schools,

129 Alms Houses and Asylums for the Indigent and Helpless,
17 Hospitals for Sick, Lame, and Diseased, and for Pregnant Women,
13 Dispensaries,
704 Friendly Societies and other Institutions for charitable and humane purposes. Besides a number of Societies for the purpose of promoting the interests of Religion and Morality.

OUT of a population of 8,872,980, in England, there are relieved by parish charity, 1,039,716, or one eighth part of the whole inhabitants of the kingdom. [*Rose's Observations on the poor Laws.*

MALACHI iv. 2. *The SUN of righteousness shall arise with HEALING IN HIS WINGS.*"

I LATELY met with an explanation of this metaphor, so descriptive of the Redeemer's character, which was not more agreeable and satisfactory to me, than I am persuaded it must be to the readers of the magazine. An English divine having received information from a correspondent at Smyrna, of a wind which there begins to blow at the rising of the sun, so salubrious in its effects, as to be generally spoken of under the name of *the doctor*, it occurred to him, that "the wings of the wind" is a scripture phrase, and that Malachi might have known the healing virtues of the wind mentioned by his correspondent: he therefore concluded, that the prophet from thence takes his *image*, of the sun rising on the wings of healthful winds, to represent the benefit which men receive from the knowledge, the efficacy, and the Spirit of Christ, by the benefit which they receive from the rising sun, attended with breezes which refresh the spirits, and brace the nervous system. [*A. M. M.*

REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN LITTLE COMPTON. (R. I.)

An extract of a letter.

"IN Little Compton, Tiverton, Westport, and Fall River towns, in the south-eastern part of this, state, the Lord has of late been in a most remarkable manner displaying his power and grace; especially in Little Campton, where Mr. Shepard is minister. There the attention has been much greater than in the other places. There the Lord appears to display his power and goodness in a most wonderful manner. Aged sinners, on the verge of the grave, and who have appeared, as to religion, like trees twice dead, and plucked up by the roots, now flourish in the courts of our God. Children of 14, 16, and even 8 years of age, cry hosanna ~~to the~~ Son of David. Opposers to the doctrines of distinguishing, electing, and uncontrollable grace, now rejoice in these doctrines, as their only hope. The enemies of all religion are silent, as to opposition; and some are constrained to say, Verily this is the finger of God! Almost every family contains a new-born soul, and some two, three, and four. Not less than one hundred appear to have tasted and seen, that the Lord is gracious, since the reformation commenced; and almost all the rest are inquiring, What must we do to be saved? Their meetings, which are almost daily, are thronged, and every countenance is solemn as the grave. The first Sabbath in April

more than forty were admitted into to the church. The work appears to increase. It is regular, still, and evidently genuine."

On the Efficacy of Prayer.

THE parents of the late Rev. Dr. *Samuel Finley* were eminently pious. They had seven sons, and one daughter. It was their practice, soon after the birth of each child, to set apart a day to be spent in prayer to God, and intercession on behalf of the child, that it might be a subject of divine grace, and an heir of eternal life. Their prayers appear to have ascended, like Cornelius's, as a memorial before God; and the parents had the pleasure to see their children distinguished for their piety even in their youth, and growing in grace as the number of their years increased. Most of them lived to an advanced age; were useful in their several spheres; and greatly respected and beloved on account of the eminence of their christian character.

POETRY.

ON the insertion of the following Poem, we cannot omit to announce, that it is designed to recommend *The Asylum for educating the Deaf and Dumb.* That institution has existed fourteen years, and produced effects most grateful to the philanthropic and pious heart. "The Deaf indeed hear, the Dumb speak; and to these poor babes the gospel is preached." The Funds of the Society are however very inadequate to the relief of the numerous and affecting objects who solicit their assistance. Only twelve candidates can be now annually admitted; and at the last half-yearly election, forty-seven applicants were unavoidably rejected: some of whom are now, by their age, rendered unadmissible; and others have brothers and sisters suffering under the same affliction. The Society have, therefore, determined to build a more extensive Asylum, and considerably to increase the numbers whom they relieve: but they cannot execute their design without liberal and extensive support; and such support, we hope, that they will not ineffectually entreat. Further information may be obtained from Henry Thornton, Esq. M. P. Birchin Lane, Treasurer; or the Rev. John Townsend, Rotherhithe, Secretary, who will gratefully accept any Donations for the intended Building, or Annual Subscriptions towards the general expences of the Society.

Even. Mag.

PETITION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB.

WHO is that little blooming boy?
Why do no books his mind employ?
Why does he breathe no sound of joy?
Oh, he is deaf and dumb!

And who that maid, so passing fair,
Of beauteous form, but mournful air,
And with a vacant idiot stare?
She too is deaf and dumb!

Would that my language could relate
Their woe-fraught pangs and cheerless state!

And how I pity their sad fate
Who are both deaf and dumb!

Their infant years were never blest
With a soft lullaby to rest:
No prattlings e'er their love exprest,
For they were deaf and dumb!

Where healthy youthful sports abound,
And others play with merry sound,
They walk alone, or gaze around,
As they are deaf and dumb!

When unseen dangers rush most near,
They stand unmov'd devoid of fear;
Nor kindest cautions can they hear,
Since they are deaf and dumb!

Not all the melodies of Spring
To them can soothing pleasure bring:
Vainly the sweetest birds may sing
To the dull deaf and dumb!

From cheerful scenes to gloom they steal;
And should they pain or rapture feel,
They can no joy nor pain reveal,
Whilst they are deaf and dumb!

What knowledge can their minds acquire?
Who can their breasts with truth inspire?
Or kindle pure celestial fire
In the sad deaf and dumb?

If rich, Science, with beams so bright,
May much dispel their mental night;
And e'en illume with heav'nly light
The darksome deaf and dumb!

But if their parents should be poor,
Then (though they might obtain a cure)
All their sad woes they must endure,
And die both deaf and dumb;

Must they, ye good, whose hearts can sigh
For human grief, thus must they die
No; to the succour you will fly
Of the poor deaf and dumb

Children whose bosoms joyful beat
Around the social hearth to meet,
Who can your much-lov'd parents greet,
Pity the deaf and dumb!

Parents, who purest transports know,
Hasten your grattitude to show,
And aid, with liberal hands, bestow
Upon the deaf and dumb!

You who can list to pious lays,
And in the Church unite to raise
The fervent hymn of heartfelt praise,
Assist the deaf and dumb!

From Heav'n may great success descend,
And constant fruits their toils attend,
Who labour anxious to befriend
The hapless deaf and dumb!

And whilst we thus deplore their lot,
May that great God be ne'er forgot,
To whom we owe that we are not,
Like them both deaf and dumb?

J. W.

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